

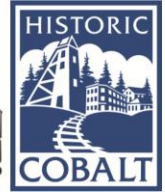


THE COBALT LODGE

Newsletter of the Cobalt Historical Society

Box 309, Cobalt, ON P0J 1C0 cobalthistoricalsociety.ca

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Update – The Pan Silver Headframe

It has been quite a summer. The Pan Silver headframe story is still unfolding, but here's a brief synopsis of the monument and the most recent news. As you read the article, keep in mind that we, together with Coleman Township and the Town of Cobalt, are partners in the Heritage Silver Trail joint venture.

Backstory, briefly

The structure was moved from Bucke Township to Silver Street in 1998 and later renamed the Willet Green Miller Memorial Site on the Heritage Silver Trail. Owned by the Town of Cobalt, the tourist attraction has been part of Cobalt's heritage landscape for decades. It was also home to our office for many years.

In 2023, concerns were raised about the deteriorating wooden timbers; The Town asked us to move our meetings elsewhere. We alerted the Town to the Parks Canada cost-sharing program to help with repair costs; we also offered to help financially, if feasible. We received no reply.

Surprise!

At the end of June this year, we learned that the Town intended to demolish the entire monument within days. Neither CHS nor Coleman Township had been involved in that decision. We immediately asked that demolition be paused while other options were explored.

At the July 21 Council meeting, CHS and Coleman Township made that case directly. We reminded Council that CHS, the Town of Cobalt, and Coleman Township have been partners in the Heritage Silver Trail since 1999. We also pointed to potential funding and community support that had emerged once the demolition plans were made public.

Council paused the demolition.



The Pan Silver Headframe in Downtown Cobalt.

Site#14 on Heritage Silver Trail.

Photo – Dan Cleroux.

And then came some very good news.

Cameron Grant of Agnico Eagle stepped forward to help with the structure. This means that the conversation has switched from “*Can we save it?*” to “*How do we stabilize it?*”

The work will be conducted in two phases:

1. Remove the timbers
2. Erect new stiff legs

Another Important Detail

CHS asked that the Town formally reaffirm the three-way Heritage Silver Trail partnership that has existed since 1999. At their August 18th meeting, Council resolved to do just that.

A formal memorandum of understanding between the Town, CHS, and Coleman Township has been signed, authorizing CHS to act as project manager for repairs to the stiff legs, while the Town retains ownership.

All of this may sound like administrative housekeeping, but we believe it is critical. Partnerships need institutional memory, especially when municipal councils change.

So, where do we stand?

The headframe is not being demolished. Stabilization is the immediate goal. Agnico Eagle has offered its support, and CHS is working with the Town and Coleman Township to move the project forward.

But a few weeks ago, we were preparing for the possibility that the Pan Silver Headframe might disappear from Silver Street altogether.

Today, we're working on how to keep it there.

And for that, we are enormously grateful to everyone who spoke up, offered support, donated funds, shared information, contacted decision-makers, or simply reminded us that this piece of Cobalt's mining story still matters.

We'll keep you posted as the work progresses.

An Important Conversation About the Right of Way Mine Fund

If you've been a member of the Cobalt Historical Society for a while, you'll probably remember our campaign to repair the roof on the Right of Way Mine headframe. Thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters, we raised just over \$22,000.

As many of you know, things didn't unfold as we had hoped.

The Right of Way Mine property is owned by the Ontario Northland Railway (ONR). Over five years ago, ONR denied us access to care for the site until environmental and structural issues had been addressed. Since then, despite our efforts, the Society has been unable to move the roof project forward.



O.N..R placing concrete barriers at the Right of Way Minesite in March 2021.

Photo by Sue Nielsen.

Meanwhile, ONR is maintaining both the Townsite and Right of Way Mine sites. That's encouraging, and we're pleased to see these important heritage landmarks receiving attention.

However, this leaves us with some questions. For years, we've had just over \$22,000 sitting in reserve for a roof repair that, realistically, we can no longer undertake.

- Should those funds remain untouched indefinitely?
- Or would they better serve the Society's mission if they were reassigned in support of other heritage projects along the Heritage Silver Trail?

What are your thoughts? After all, it was your support that built this fund in the first place, and your voice should be part of deciding its future.

News from our friends at the Cobalt Mining Museum

Cobalt Waterways and the Cobalt Water Act of 1917, curated by Felicity Buckell, will explore how Cobalt's silver boom affected the region's waterways and prompted one of Canada's earliest environmental protection laws. We'll celebrate Cobalt's contribution to the development of water protection in Canada, while considering the ongoing relationship between industry, communities, and the natural environment.

Funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage and in partnership with Agnico Eagle Mines Limited and Le Centre culturel ARTEM, the exhibition will open at the Cobalt Mining Museum in spring 2027 before travelling to the Timmins Museum National Exhibition Centre and the Musée Fossilarium in Notre-Dame-du-Nord.

More to come – including opportunities for community members to contribute. Stay tuned!

Contact Felicity at felicity@cobaltminingmuseum.com

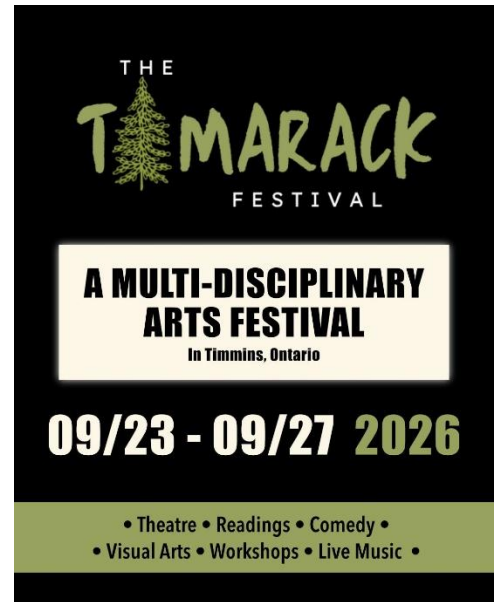


Alyssa Kostello – ‘Silver and Gold’

CHS volunteer Maggie Wilson has been assisting Alyssa Kostello (Temiskaming Shores-based creative) with some research. Alyssa has been developing a TV series concept called 'Silver and Gold'. Inspired by real people and real events, 'Silver and Gold' follows the women and racially diverse residents of Cobalt in the early 1900s. While mining creates a colonial wild west boom in Northern Ontario, immigrants and women struggle to turn a muddy, violent mess into a community with workers' rights, women's rights, and human rights. Alyssa is an Artist in Residence for Tamarack Arts Festival in Timmins and will be presenting her work on 'Silver and Gold' on Sept 26 at this Festival.



Alyssa Kostello.



Tamarack Festival – Timmins.

For those who aren't familiar, Alyssa Kostello wrote and produced the short film 'Ms. Mary' in 2025, inspired by local retired music teacher Emma Laughlin. She just wrapped production of her second local short film, 'That Summer' (written by Tracy Varju) in Coleman Township in August - stay tuned for a local screening in 2027.

Replacing the Nipissing Lookout

Agnico has authorized us to move forward with the new viewing platform next to the ruins of the Nipissing low grade mill. They have generously offered to cover the cost of the work which will be carried out by Demora Construction Services. Both Demora and CHS hope to have the new lookout in place before this season ends, but it may be spring 2027 before we share the new view from Nip Hill.

Agnico Eagle additions to the Heritage Silver Trail

As part of their habitat restoration and rehabilitation mandate, our patrons at Agnico Eagle Mines Limited have installed four new posters on the Heritage Silver Trail. At Site 4, the Little Silver Vein, you'll find information about bats and efforts to protect their roosts in the Nipissing 96 adit. At the foot of the McKinley Darragh Mill at Site 3 they've been conducting a series of revegetation trials. Across the road at Site 8, the Cobalt Lake/Hellens Mill site, they have replanted the slope facing Cobalt Lake.



Poster at the Nipissing 96 adit describes the importance of protecting bat roosts.

Cobalt Silver Camp Historical Trivia

Test your knowledge of the history of the Cobalt Silver Camp.
Answers can be found on the back page of the newsletter.

1. In what year did Dr. Doug Pollard open his Highway Book Shop?
a) 1955 b) 1956 c) 1957 d) 1958
2. The 'Deluxe', once located on Lang St. in Cobalt, was a popular what?
a) Pool Hall b) Theatre c) Dance Hall d) Restaurant
3. John M. Lyle, architect of the Cobalt Train Station, also designed what other building(s)?
a) Union Station in Toronto b) Empire State Building in NYC c) The CN Tower d) Parliament Hill
4. Who, in 1965, erected the World's Largest Claim Post in Cobalt?
a) Harry Miller b) Jack Koza c) Paul Hermiston d) Albert Chitaroni
5. In 1932, a blast in a mine drift, caused what lake to accidentally drain of its contents?
a) Cobalt Lake b) Kerr Lake c) Giroux Lake d) Crosswise Lake

Maude's Chance - A new novel set in the famous Cobalt Camp

We're excited to announce that the Cobalt silver camp is the setting for a new historical novel to be published in October by author Christine Langlois.

Maude's Chance tells the story of a young mother who follows her husband to the camp and, when he gets sick in a typhoid epidemic, ends up alone and broke. To survive, she takes dangerous work caring for typhoid victims and bonds with other women in the camp as they battle hostile mine owners and politicians hiding the crisis from investors and the outside world.

Langlois based the novel on factual accounts contained in historian Douglas Baldwin's *Cobalt: Canada's Forgotten Silver Boom Town*. In 1909, the camp was hit by fire, followed by a horrific typhoid epidemic. Baldwin describes the official foot-dragging that followed, and that the crisis was finally resolved with the help of "the ladies of the town."

"Women's stories are often lost. But when I read that line," Langlois says, "I knew there was a novel hiding in plain sight."

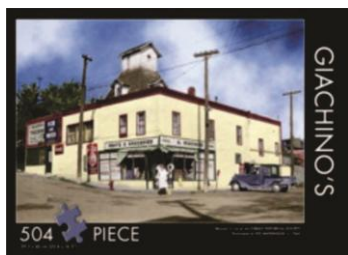
Langlois grew up in Kirkland Lake in the '50s and '60s, but her family's story in the north began decades earlier. Her great-grandparents came north in the early 1900s, drawn by the opportunities of New Ontario. One set, George and Emma Brewer, brought nine children to the famous Cobalt silver rush and had a tenth child in the camp.

Langlois fictionalizes Emma as a supporting character in the novel. "I remember her as Gigi (for great grandma) and a warm presence. I wanted to honour her – by all family accounts, she was gentle, kind – and tough!" After a long career as a journalist with stints at Canadian Living and Reader's Digest in southern Ontario, Christine is eager to revisit her northern roots through her historical fiction -- telling the stories of the tough northern women and remarkable communities that shaped her family and the North she grew up knowing. Her next novel will take her back to Kirkland Lake and the early gold camp, following the true story of a determined woman prospector chasing the big strike.

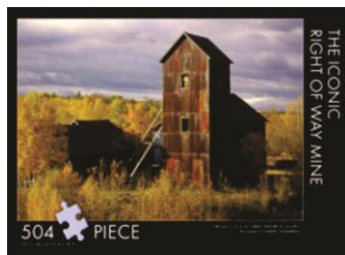
We had the pleasure of meeting author Christine Langlois when she visited Cobalt this summer. She came to see the landmarks, including the Brewer homestead on Cobalt Street, still covered in the original tin siding, and the Coniagas Headframe, both of which are featured in *Maude's Chance*.

Langlois and her husband and fellow northerner Chris Coombs will be back in the North in October to promote *Maude's Chance* with an event planned at the Museum of Northern History in Kirkland Lake on Saturday, October 24, from 2 to 4 pm, with other northern events pending. *Maude's Chance* will be available in print and ebook through local booksellers and on Amazon and other online platforms.

Help Support our Fundraising Efforts - Cobalt Puzzles



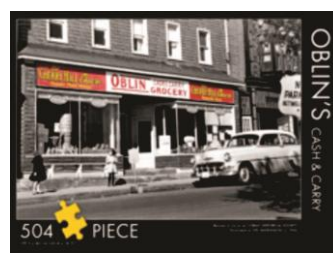
*Giachino's Coniagas Shaft House
#4 circa 1945 as a grocery store.*



*The Iconic Right of Way Mine
Photo by Charles Dumaresq.*



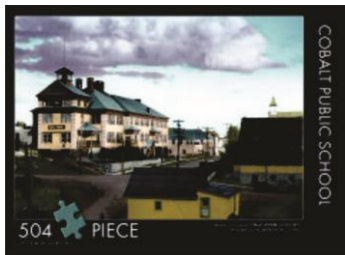
*Right of Way Mine Reflections
Photo by Sue Nielsen.*



*Oblin's Cash and Carry
Circa 1945 on Lang Street*



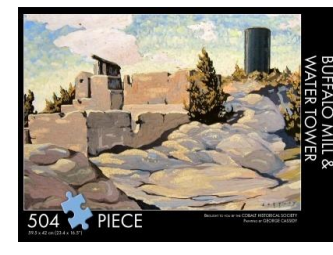
*Ontario Northland Railway
Station Cobalt 1945.*



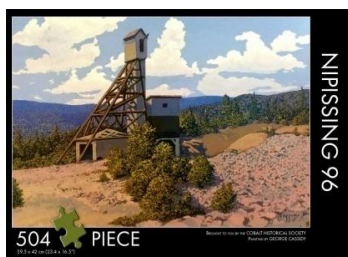
*Cobalt Public School
Photo circa 1955.*



*Silver Miller Mine
Photograph circa 1950*



*Buffalo Mine & Water Tower
George Cassidy Print*



Nipissing 96-George Cassidy Print



Townsite Mine



Cobalt Map by Ruth Bernache



Hometown Hootenanny

All Puzzles \$30. Contact White Mountain Publications at 705-679-5555 or visit www.wmpub.ca for details.

Answers to Cobalt Silver Camp Trivia Questions

1. b) 1957
2. d) Restaurant
3. a) Union Station
- 4.c) Paul Hermiston
5. A) Cobalt Lake